

DJILAS AS PROPHET

—Gunnar D. Kumlien

THE
Commonweal

Catholic Book Week

THE LITERATURE OF DESPAIR

by Bernard G. Murchland

IN QUEST OF GOD

by Gerard S. Sloyan

Elizabeth Bartelme

James Finn

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Sister Maris Stella

George G. Higgins

Philip Scharper

J. N. Moody

H. A. Reinhold

Volume LXVII, No. 21

February 21, 1958

Twenty-Five Cents

Press Month, III

The Commonweal has been generally accepted as a Catholic publication, though there is nothing in the masthead to indicate that the magazine is an organ of the Church or of any official body of the Church. As a wholly independent lay weekly which is primarily concerned with the temporal order — the specific province of the layman — The Commonweal clearly cannot claim to speak for the Church. . . .

As long as The Commonweal continues to concern itself mainly with the thorny social and political problems of the day — dealing in concrete realities and not only in abstract principles — a large number of Catholics will continue to take strong issue with the magazine. This is as it should be. . . .

As is fitting for a lay publication, our primary interest is in the "world," the temporal order. We do not conceive of our role in priestly or near-priestly terms. We do not think it is our special vocation to lay down the moral law for others or to indulge in overt preaching, for instance. This is not to say that we think social, political and artistic matters can be divorced from morality or that it is proper for a group of Catholic editors to put out a magazine which does not give expression to the Christian spirit. But, in terms of the Christian vocation, it is our feeling that The Commonweal should serve more as a "witness" than as an apostle. . . .

—From a leaflet, *What is The Commonweal?*

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THE COMMONWEAL
386 FOURTH AVENUE
NEW YORK 16

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Entered as second-class matter at the post office at Orange, Conn., under the act of March 3, 1879. Published weekly and printed in the U. S. A. by the Commonweal Publishing Co., Inc., 386 Fourth Ave., New York 16, N.Y. Murray Hill 3-9685.

Copyright © 1958 The Commonweal Publishing Co., Inc.
U. S. and Canada, \$8 a year. Foreign, \$10. Single copies 25¢

THE Commonweal

A Weekly Review of Public Affairs, Literature, and the Arts

THIRTY-FOURTH YEAR OF PUBLICATION

—week by week—

AMERICA'S SCHOOLS

THE STATE of American education has become in the last few months an issue of front-page importance. The problems are not new—how to raise standards and yet extend educational opportunities, how to deal with juvenile delinquency, how to provide more and better schools and teachers, how to find the money to do these things—but a combination of circumstances has suddenly lent them a new and inescapable air of urgency.

American faith in the superiority of Yankee “know-how,” particularly in the supposedly specially American area of technology, was deeply shaken by the rise of the Russian moons. Then followed the release of a voluminous study of education in the Soviet Union, which revealed that American schools compared poorly with their counterparts in the U.S.S.R. in terms of rigorous curriculum content, and this in the humanities as well as in technical subjects. These dismaying revelations touched off a series of fact-finding studies which corroborated the bad news.

It has been established that in the United States today only one in twenty-two of our public high school students is studying physics. (A half-century ago the figure was one out of five.) Less than one-fourth of our public high school students are studying algebra. (In 1890, more than half did.) Fourteen American states, as of last year, did not require even one course in science or mathematics for high school graduation. Since 1950 the number of qualified high school science teachers has dropped fifty-three per cent, while the high school population has gone up more than sixteen per cent.

The need for revision of our educational program to correct these deficiencies has been testified to by any number of educators. Local and national officials have expressed similar views, and

President Eisenhower was moved to devote a major address to the problem of raising educational standards and accelerating the development of scholars, particularly in the sciences.

UNFORTUNATELY, the interest in efforts to do right by tomorrow's scientists and technicians, especially the “gifted” ones, in consideration of our life-and-death race with the Soviets, seems to have diverted attention from the pre-sputnik ills of our educational system. What about the desperate shortage of school buildings? What about the shortage of qualified teachers in any and every field, and not just in the sciences? What about the dismal level of teachers' salaries and working conditions in the schools? What about the hundred and one problems which have beset our public schools for years—overcrowding, inadequate staffs, lack of facilities for all kinds of “special” cases (the delinquent, disturbed or retarded as well as the exceptionally bright)?

In the city of New York these latter problems have reached a crisis. A wave of incidents in the city's schools—stabblings, rapes, attacks on teachers, the suicide of a school principal—has set off a great public outcry, focused in this case on the issue of delinquency in the schools. Reacting to the public clamor, the Board of Education in New York announced that its responsibility to the great majority of non-problem children required it to exclude the “trouble-makers” from its schools. More than six hundred students, “charged with a violation of law involving violence or insubordination,” were indefinitely suspended from the schools, with the remarkable statement that “no instruction can be provided” for them.

This New York action is almost certainly illegal, and it is clearly not a solution of the problem to

turn delinquent youngsters—or, in this case, youngsters accused vaguely of “violence or insubordination”—out upon the streets. The New York Board of Education has been almost universally condemned for its action. Nevertheless, without going into the complexities of the case, we can sympathize with the motives of the New York educators. Their “act of desperation,” as it has been called, dumps the problem into the lap of every citizen of the city and the state, and this is ultimately where the problem belongs.

There are not enough schools for such children, in New York or anywhere else in the country, not enough teachers, not enough counselors. There is not enough money in the school budget to provide them, despite year in and year out testimony that they are sorely needed, despite endless predictions of an educational collapse like the one in New York.

We believe that New York will solve its school problems. For one thing, a great deal more money and effort will now be forthcoming in that city. We believe that America will solve its school problems, too. But as the sputniks have roused the public to one set of failings, let the events in New York rouse them—as they have roused New Yorkers—to other failings. The “realists” will say that we can’t afford to do everything at once, but logic will convince us that all the aspects of our educational system are related, and we must try to do everything at once, and as soon as possible.

P.O.A.U. CRITIC

SOME WEEKS ago we commented on the tenth-anniversary statement containing “Questions for a Catholic Candidate,” which was released by the P.O.A.U. (Protestants and Other Americans United for the Separation of Church and State). Although the P.O.A.U. made its ritual disclaimer of being anti-Catholic, warned against forming an anti-Catholic political party, and opposed blanket boycotts of candidates “of any particular denomination,” the list of questions was designed specifically for Catholic candidates for President or Vice-President. The questions concerned the Catholic “boycott of public schools,” the distribution of public funds for parochial schools and the appointment of an ambassador to the Vatican.

The questions, as we pointed out, were misleading and clearly based on false assumptions. At that time some Protestant groups and leaders were careful to dissociate themselves from the statement. More recently the director of research and press

relations for the P.O.A.U., Mr. Stanley Lichtenstein, has resigned from the organization because of these questions. Some of the reasons Mr. Lichtenstein gave for his resignation are worth quoting. After referring to P.O.A.U.’s assertion that a candidate’s religion should not be a shield to conceal opinions, Mr. Lichtenstein said: “If a Catholic candidate needs scrutiny, then, by implication, a Protestant candidate does *not* need special scrutiny, and, in effect, his Protestantism is being used as a ‘shield to conceal his opinions on matters of church-state policy.’”

Mr. Lichtenstein also objected to the P.O.A.U. remark that “the election of a Catholic President of the United States raises certain social and civic issues which cannot be ignored. . . .” He pointed out that “these issues exist independently of the religious affiliations of the President, and would remain whether the people chose a Catholic, a Protestant, a Jewish, an atheistic or any other kind of President.” That is, Mr. Lichtenstein would not, for instance, have the United States join other civilized nations of the world which are pleased to receive the diplomatic advantages that accrue to those who have a representative at the Vatican State. But he would insist that his objection would be as meaningful for a non-Catholic President as for a Catholic President. This is a point well taken, for the arguments of those who favor renewing diplomatic relations are just as clearly independent of the President’s religious affiliations.

Mr. Lichtenstein further showed the absurdity of the P.O.A.U. statement by drawing a logical inference. “It would be interesting,” he said, “to learn where P.O.A.U. draws the line. If special questions must be put to Catholic candidates for President, must they also be put to Catholic candidates for Senator or Congressman, for Governor, for Mayor, for dog-catcher?”

On many particular questions concerning church-state relations, we would differ markedly from Mr. Lichtenstein. But his judgment of the anniversary statement of the P.O.A.U. is reasoned and sensible. One need not share his premises or beliefs to recognize the confusing, self-contradictory thought which lies behind the P.O.A.U. release.

TUNISIAN AIR RAID

MILITARY commanders in the heat of battle can hardly be counted on to reach every decision on the basis of its probable effect on worldwide concerns. The French officers who ordered

the bombing of the Tunisian village of Sakiet-Sidi-Youssef on February 8, a market day, were not thinking primarily in terms of the heightening NATO-Soviet struggle for the allegiance of the Arab world. They were apparently intent on silencing the anti-aircraft batteries which had brought down one or two of their planes and replying to an earlier Tunisia-based sortie that had succeeded in claiming the lives of fifteen French soldiers. And they were aware that in recent months France has been claiming "the right of hot pursuit" across territorial borders (a "right" which is far from universally recognized). Perhaps they hoped so to terrorize the people of Tunisia that this former French colony would serve as less of a "privileged sanctuary" and source of supply for the Algerian rebels.

In any event, they ordered an air raid on this little Tunisian village near the Algerian border on a day when its market place was thronged with people. Eyewitnesses say that the attacking planes flew in low, bombing and machine-gunning the village square. Seventy soon lay dead and a hundred wounded; nearly half the victims were women and children—defenseless peasants from the neighborhood, or destitute Algerian refugees. The repercussions of this slaughter soon went round the world. An attempt at "pacification" could hardly have been more grievously miscalculated.

Americans were horrified to learn that B-26's had taken a prominent part in the attack. Moreover, reporters on this scene of desolation were shown bomb and rocket cases made in the U.S.A. Secretary Dulles quite accurately expressed the nation's sentiment when he told the French Ambassador in Washington that we were profoundly disturbed. Yet in the eyes of many Arabs the United States will be implicated in this crime; an initial American expression of regret will hardly be sufficient—particularly at a moment when the Arab world stands at such a fateful crossroads.

Hitherto this country does not seem to have been eminently successful in prevailing upon the French Republic to move in a direction that would serve the common cause. In the face of obstinate French resistance we have therefore tended to go along. In consequence we had to share in the resentments the French provoked in their vain struggle to hold onto Indochina. And when the French forces were driven out, our prestige in the Afro-Asian world was that much further impaired. Similarly last year when we refused to support the taking up of the Algerian question before the United Nations, we incurred serious enmity in the Arab world.

If the bombing of Sakiet-Sidi-Youssef is formally protested before the U.N., this country, as leader of the forces of the free world, cannot oppose such action. If a condemnatory resolution is put to a vote, our delegates cannot even abstain. Theoretically, at least, there is a way open to securing some measure of satisfaction and compensation for this slaughter of the innocents. Inquiries in Paris indicate that the French Government itself did not instigate the raid. If, in view of its relations with Tunisia (and Morocco), of its stakes in other parts of Africa and of the cause of Europe and the West, France could be persuaded to disavow this act, which assaults the consciences of men, something might be salvaged from the ruins. Such a disavowal would undoubtedly involve some sort of formal apology to President Bourguiba, removal and punishment of the officers responsible for the raid and monetary compensation to the bereaved families of the victims and for the physical damage wrought in the village and its environs.

Can the United States prevail upon our French ally to bow before the exigencies of the case and agree to make such substantial reparation? If not, we may soon be forced to make a bitter choice between two peoples, for both of whom we have but friendly feelings. Even if the Algerian question itself admits of no single clear-cut solution, much as our natural sympathies support the aspirations of colonial peoples, the bombing of this Tunisian village involves little matter for debate. It is a clear-cut issue on which Americans tend to be of one mind. If this reaction should weaken long-cherished ties with France, so be it.

TEAMSTERS IN RECEIVERSHIP

SOME KIND of temporary order has been achieved in the troubled affairs of the Teamsters Union. It will be remembered that fourteen anti-Hoffa rank-and-file members of the union asked a Federal court in Washington to set aside the election of James Hoffa as president, on the grounds that many delegates who voted for him were themselves illegally chosen. Before this issue was resolved, a compromise was worked out between the opposing forces, with the approval of the court. According to the terms of this compromise, James Hoffa has assumed the presidency of the union, with his actions subject to scrutiny by a court-appointed board consisting of one pro-Hoffa lawyer and one anti-, plus one former judge as a neutral party.

It should go without saying that considerable legal imagination was involved in the original appeal to the courts by the anti-Hoffa forces, and the fourteen rank-and-file members demonstrated a rare kind of courage in instituting the action. Further, it is almost certain that the conditions imposed by the court on Mr. Hoffa and his associates will do a great deal of good. Under the terms of the settlement, for example, the Teamster leadership is supposed to accept a model code of by-laws, end trusteeships over local unions, and institute acceptable methods of accounting for union funds. Yet with all these factors to the credit side of the ledger, supervision of a union by a court-appointed committee of non-members still raises serious questions. There is no denying that Mr. Hoffa poses special problems, but it seems to us that the present arrangement in the Teamsters Union can hardly be considered an ideal solution.

SUMMIT LETTERS TRANSLATED

MR. RESTON of the *New York Times* has done many readers a service by running the Eisenhower-Bulganin letters through the Uniquack, the electronic translator which seems to be his exclusive property. Excerpts can give only a pale idea of what the Uniquack has accomplished, but in this area a pale idea is better than none.

Mr. Bulganin, in this translation, told the President that he had made the mistake of thinking the letters were meant for him, whereas in reality they were "largely addressed to the people of the world who cannot think and will not read anything but headlines." The President replied that he thought "our Government should study all these matters at the working level before reaching the summit or nonworking level."

There is enough truth in these translations to discourage those who urge the meeting and to cheer those who see little value in one. Nevertheless, the original letters may have done the Western powers an unrecognized service. They have given our leaders another lesson in political propaganda. (Although how many such lessons we can stand is an open question.) And they may have forced some new thinking not only on the presentation of our foreign policy, but on the policy itself. We have, at least, heard more new ideas propounded within the last months than we are accustomed to. It must be admitted, unfortunately, that few of them seem to have any effect on either the working or the nonworking levels of our government.

SMALL VOICE

DETROIT IS a busy place these days, at least in one way. Production in the auto industry is down to sixty per cent of capacity, and in January new-car sales fell to the lowest daily rate in four years. Nevertheless, the war of words is still going strong. Walter Reuther of the United Automobile Workers and the heads of the big companies had hardly finished saying harsh things about each other in connection with profit-sharing when another contender was heard from. Testifying before a Senate anti-trust subcommittee, president of the American Motors Company George Romney fired a double-barreled blast, one at Mr. Reuther and the U.A.W. and the other at General Motors and Ford.

In the present situation, Mr. Romney said, the thing to do is to divide the power inherent in big unions and big corporations. If he had his way, Congress would split General Motors and Ford into smaller companies and would also split the bargaining power of the union. "Economic power in the automobile industry should be curbed," said Mr. Romney, whose company makes the Nash Rambler and is one of the two still surviving comparatively small producers. To accomplish this, he thinks that any company which approaches a dominant place in basic industry should be broken up, with the break-up point coming when a firm exceeds thirty-five per cent of the total sales in its industry or, if it operates in more than one industry, twenty-five per cent.

Mr. Romney's remarks make us rather nostalgic; it seems a long time since a representative of industry has launched an attack on bigness as such, at least in relation to capital as well as labor. But the reaction to Mr. Romney's remarks was not enthusiastic. Union spokesmen said he vastly overestimated the power of the U.A.W. Officials at G.M. and Ford made no comments for the record, but their off-the-record remarks were reported to be bitter. Most favorable comment of all, as reported by the *Wall Street Journal*, was that of veteran trust-buster Senator O'Mahoney of Wyoming, who said Mr. Romney's recommendations pointed "in the right direction" but added that he has always hesitated to suggest any limit on the size of a corporation provided it did not violate the anti-trust laws. All in all, it seems unlikely that anything will come of Mr. Romney's suggestion. But we must admit it was nice to hear from somebody in the auto industry besides Walter Reuther and spokesmen for the Big Three.

The Literature of Despair

*Beyond the trappings of doom and futility there
is a search for meaning by a generation that has
not so much denied God as been deprived of Him*

by BERNARD G. MURCHLAND

“DESPAIR,” Miguel de Unamuno wrote in his *Tragic Sense of Life*, “may be the basis of a vigorous life, of an efficacious activity, of an ethic, of an esthetic, of a religion and even of a logic.”

Few statements could provide a better key to an assessment of the contemporary mentality. Despair has become, as it were, *the* human condition. It is the measure of human dignity no less than the path to spiritual transcendence. A French thinker, Maurice Blanchot, formulates the basis of all spiritual experience in these words: “It can only have its principle and its end in the absence of salvation, in the renunciation of all hope.” An anguished consciousness becomes a central value. That is why it would not do to see in this phenomenon merely a kind of existential game, a literary *cheval de bataille*.

This despair must be viewed in a much more universal perspective. Ultimately it must be understood in a metaphysical sense, as something that penetrates beyond any superficial stratification of human reality to touch upon what has been called man’s “ontological moorings.” It reaches back into history to echo the despairing voices of Pascal, Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, back still further past a thousand dark nights of the soul, past the *homo abyssus est* of St. Augustine, past the anguished cry that rose from Calvary, past the pain of Job and the prophets to the dim memory of some ancient and radical tragedy.

Today that memory finds forceful expression in such theologians as Karl Barth, Emil Brunner and Reinhold Niebuhr. Formulas such as “crisis theology” and “the theology of eclipse” have found their place in our vocabulary. This despair is also the cornerstone of the most vital of contemporary philosophies with spokesmen

ranging from the Russian Orthodox Nicholas Berdyaev (for whom the hands of universal history pointed to “the disintegration of the human image”) and the Jewish philosopher Martin Buber to the atheist Jean Paul Sartre and the Catholic Gabriel Marcel. It is sometimes thought that this manner of thinking is confined to academic circles, leaving the masses uncontaminated. But there is much evidence to the contrary. The world itself stands in danger of infiltration of hopelessness and absurdity. Centuries of bad thinking and an inhuman social order across the world today have generated a *taedium vitae*, a rootlessness and a boredom that is so subtly claiming as its victims the vast majority of men that they are largely unaware of the disease that is attacking them. Their defenses have been worn down.

The literary artist, closer to the common consciousness of men than the theologian or the philosopher, reflects the universality of this modern predicament with great accuracy and insight. He is the gifted chronicler of a world adrift; of a generation under the sign of death; of man in search of meaning. It is the literary artist who sensitively records what Joseph Conrad has called “the withering sense of solitariness . . . the tremendous fact of our isolation, of the indestructible loneliness that surrounds, envelops and clothes every human soul from cradle to grave and perhaps beyond.” But the literary artist does not simply record; he struggles in his way amid the ruins, preparing what Albert Camus has called “a renaissance beyond the limits of nihilism.”

It would be hard to find a major author of our century unaffected by despair. A whole school of poets and dramatists denounces an uncontrollable absurdity. But it is perhaps the much more vocal school of novelists that performs most heroically in the arena of despair. One thinks of such continental writers as Kafka, Gide,

Father Bernard G. Murchland, C.S.C., of the University of Notre Dame, is associate editor of *Ave Maria*.

Mann, Moravia, St. Exupéry, Roger Martin du Gard, Malraux, Koestler, Camus and even Françoise Sagan. One thinks, too, of such English-language writers as Joyce, D. H. Lawrence, Hemingway, Orwell, Faulkner, and Huxley.

AT THIS point there may be a temptation to associate despair with atheism. It is when we discover that despair is plumbed more deeply and examined more closely by the Catholic writer that we suspect atheism is accidental to the subject. Graham Greene, with his lost childhoods and struggles for salvation, comes to mind immediately. "Man's condition," wrote Bernanos, "is such that neither around him nor within him can he perceive anything except in the form of agony." Julian Green, expressing his view of life, said: "Living in this world is a bad business. The Bible is one long lament for the sadness of the world and St. Teresa did not scruple to say that life is only a bad farce." Mauriac, with his Pascalian vision, believes in "the bestial end of civilization." Add to these the no less apocalyptic figures of Claudel, Chesterton, Bloy and Sigrid Undset and we find a formidable expression of despair within the framework of the Catholic faith itself.

What does this vast body of the literature of despair signify? It seems unlikely that it is merely a vain voice. One cannot question its validity without at the same time questioning some of the sincerest and most intelligent minds of our day. Nor can one fail to be struck by the positive qualities that emerge from this general declaration of absurdity. There is, I believe, a fundamental cowardice in an attitude that refuses to admit the value this literature reveals by seeking refuge in a high-sounding language of detraction.

Admittedly it is not an easy phenomenon to analyze. But we must begin by recognizing the claim it has on our interest. Unless we understand it as an authentic testimony of man and society today we do it a fundamental injustice. The literature of despair is direct in its protest against those intellectual and social forces which make it difficult to live as a free man. It calls us away from stifling abstractions and deadening conformity to insist upon the significance of man himself—his motives, feelings and hopes. It drives us back to our basic, inner problems and forces us to some ultimate decision. It urges us to **respond, in a sincere and realistic way, to the situations we face** and reminds us that man himself is the primal situation, the initial matrix of responsibility and free actions. It demands personal integrity at all costs. Such, it seems, are the common denominators of the literature of despair—although in varying degrees. The modern writer not only reflects an absurd situation. *He adopts a point of view before it.* Indifference does not exist in the literature of the twentieth century.

"It is by reflecting upon despair," Gabriel Marcel has said, "and perhaps only by reflecting upon despair, that we can attain a positive conception of hope. Hope can only be an active combat against despair." In this observation there seems to be a clue to the meaning of our literature of despair. But here some terms need to be clarified. This despair is not, as some have tended to think, primarily a condition that can be defined in contrast to the theological virtue of hope. It indicates not so much a revolt against God as against the world—less a theological despair, that is, than a kind of human despair. It reflects the situation of man trying to place himself in society.

MODERN MAN did not create the situation he faces; he inherited it. He did not choose absurdity; it was thrust upon him. His despair is therefore fundamentally an intelligent and responsible *recognition of a situation*. It does not deny the possibility of hope. It simply states one can only hope when some reason is forged out of the enveloping confusion and hopelessness to justify it. This intelligent recognition of an absurd situation thus implies (or, better, stimulates) a desire to work out of it, to transcend it. Hence despair is a refusal to put up with a bad situation, a refusal to admit that nothing can be done, a refusal to sacrifice one's integrity to the point of falling into a morbid and passive fascination with the idea of self-destruction. This human despair is precisely the contrary of theological despair.

This is a complex matter. But an attitude of compassionate and sensitive understanding is needed on our part to get beyond the trappings of doom and futility of modern literature and see there a creative search for happiness and meaningfulness by a generation that has not so much denied God as been deprived of Him. And in this respect the supreme relevance of Camus' remark becomes obvious: "Even if a novel describes only nostalgia, despair, frustration, it still creates a form of salvation. To talk of despair is to conquer it. Despairing literature is a contradiction in terms."

Outstanding examples of such a search for salvation can be found in modern literature. No novelist, with the possible exception of Fyodor Dostoevsky, has grasped the distressing ambiguity of a world given over to fatigue and nameless sorrow or given it such original expression as the Austrian Jew, Franz Kafka. Impressed early in life with Martin Heidegger's words, "During the century of the cosmic night the abyss of the world must be suffered and confronted, but for this it is necessary that some attain the abyss itself," Kafka set forth on a dark journey that ended in the foothills of hope.

Kafka experienced the world as a mortal menace. It is the tribunal, the law, the enemy. One is thrown,

unarmed, alone and confused, before it. And in his isolation man becomes singularly aware of the freedom and responsibility that weigh upon him each moment. He is stretched between the sentiment of his own agony and a hint of the completion that awaits him beyond the abyss. Kafka, and he is somewhat like Graham Greene in this respect, never quite got born. All his life he fought for a place in the race of men, for some identity in the paternal mansion. His relationship with his own father assumes its fullest meaning in this respect, for in the abandonment and loneliness of his youth he found a key to human destiny: one is never at home in this world.

We must insist upon Kafka's radical refusal to submit to an absurd condition. Despair (or the struggle with and recognition of despair) became for him a way out. It became a means of justifying his existence, of confronting and transcending the forces that stood against him. By accepting battle he proved not only his capacity for life but also his *right to live*. He evokes a deep respect for a soul who emerged from the abyss with a sense of love and humility, with "a profound desire for the spiritual affirmation" of his existence.

ANOTHER example of a creative search for salvation through despair can be found in Rainer Maria Rilke, for whom genuine awareness of ourselves is indissolubly linked with anguish—and particularly the anguish of death. Through the misery and degradation of earth, through the "majesty of human suffering," we attain an intimation of a metamorphosis, of a resurrection. In Rilke's *Sonnets* and *Elegies* there is a somber grandeur that bears tidings of a hidden kingdom. It is not enough to await this kingdom or expect it as a matter of course. We must undertake it through a creative, personal effort and in that sense prepare it. We must "Choose to be changed. With the flame be enraptured,/where from within you a thing changefully-splendid escapes."

The anguish of suffering takes on great importance in Rilke's art. It is the means by which man raises himself to a higher degree and through it understands that earthly existence represents only one stage in an evolution that leads us upwards from despair to a mysterious yet quite certain fulfillment. Death is a kind of screen upon which is projected the ultimate reality of things. The complexity of man is acutely analyzed in Rilke's *Selected Letters*. For him, the life of man is to reach the depths, in agony and suffering, and thus define his true stature.

In the work of André Malraux we encounter yet another effort to conquer despair and salvage human dignity from a general condition of hopelessness. *Man's Fate*, his novel of revolutionary China, is a striking document of the intimate bond which unites despair and hope. In the China of 1925-27 "human-

ity was dense and heavy, heavy with flesh, with blood, with suffering, eternally clinging to itself like all that dies." Old Gisors, wise with years and opium, knew that "the essence of man was anguish, the consciousness of his own fatality," that "one can always find terror in himself," that "it is very rare for man to be able to endure—how shall I say it?—his condition, his fate as man." On the other hand, "Gisors felt hope, as he felt anguish, hope of nothing, expectation, and his love had to be crushed in order that he should discover that."

More than any other character, Gisors incarnates Malraux's own thought—that there arises from the very heart of reality a sense of absurdity ("in which one cannot live but which one can affront") that does not rule out the possibility of transcendence, of hope. Some form of salvation is possible because "all that men are willing to die for, beyond self-interest, tends more or less obscurely to justify that fate by giving it a foundation in dignity." There are, argues Malraux, values worth living for because they are worth dying for. But in either case they must be wrenched from the absurdity that threatens to engulf them.

THE PATTERN that can be detected in Kafka, Rilke, and Malraux is present in even greater lucidity and urgency of expression in the work of the Algerian-born Nobel Prize winner, Albert Camus. In his work, absurdity and despair are erected into a positive creed with great philosophical and artistic precision. Absurdity, Camus tells us in *The Myth of Sisyphus*, figures as "the first of my truths. . . . To seek the truth is not to seek what is desirable. If we have to feed on illusion, like donkeys, in order to escape the question of the meaning of life, the absurd spirit prefers to adopt Kierkegaard's answer of despair, rather than resign itself to falsehood." Despair, he asserts, is a search for meaning; it is enlightened reason becoming aware of its own limitations. And the spirit of revolt that follows not only "gives life its worth" but also permits man to stand upon human dignity to protest the lamentable conditions under which he is forced to live. It is in man's awareness of himself through conscious revolt that he accedes to liberty and establishes some meaning in life. In the short play "Caligula," Camus expresses his own outlook in these words: "To lose one's life is a little thing and I shall have the courage to do it if necessary; but to see the meaning of this life dissipated, to see our reason for existence disappear, that is what is unbearable. *One cannot live without meaning.*" (Emphasis added.)

The literature of despair embodies one of the most searching self-examinations man has ever attempted. And its immediate significance, as it appears from this brief analysis, is this: we are responsible for the salva-

tion of the world no less than of ourselves. We have a debt towards life. That is to say, we must commit ourselves to the establishment of a human world order by identifying ourselves personally with the misery and suffering of mankind and in this manner establish meaning and identity in our own lives. Human dignity must be safeguarded—at the price of great suffering. From a multiplicity of approaches, and with varying degrees of insight, the authors of our century have propounded that thesis. There is, in addition to those already examined, Joyce setting himself “to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race.” There is Antoine de St. Exupéry asking the question that plagued Job centuries ago: “What is it that corrupts the noble clay of which man is made?” There is the struggle of a Vercors against the “awareness we have of ourselves as a race constitutively exiled from the cosmos, plunged in ignorance and solitude and condemned to die.” There is the tortured drama of a D. H. Lawrence, a Gide or even a Sagan. And the extraordinary testimony, charged and vibrant and defiant, of a Simone Weil teaching the disturbing truth that the unbelief of atheists is closer to love of God than the easy faith of those who never really experience Him, accepting the void of this life and proclaiming the Absurd as a religious category through which we attain to a goodness not of this world.

ALL CREATIVITY, communication and transcendence are bound up with the paradox of man's limited condition. If this be the truth our literature of despair conveys, then we go beyond a finite perspective to where theology and literature find a common meeting ground. I believe the literature of despair reflects an authentic religious experience. It would be difficult to determine precisely the extent of this experience and we must say that it is incomplete; but the evidence that mankind is in the process of reaching a new and purified understanding of itself is present. One remembers the abyss of the Babylonian captivity, when a broken people cried out their despair: “Our bones are dried up and our hope is lost and we are cut off.” Yet to this people, through the prophet Ezechiel, was given the promise that their sepulchers would be opened and they would be brought out of their graves. To this people came the vision of the resurrection of dry bones, full of life and spirit and vitality.

The positive quality of the literature of despair as a creative search for those values that justify life can aid us in re-examining the structure of Christian hope. Hope, taken now in a theological sense, arises from a condition of contradiction. It is situated within the framework of trial and constitutes, as it were, our response to it. In other words, hope arises out

of man's limitations, his consciousness of being in the state of captivity and the less life is experienced as a captivity the less man will be able to live as a human being. All effort to loosen his bonds ends in his enslavement. It is this condition of alienation, of darkness and imprisonment, this sentiment of the tragic, that man must recognize and accept before hope is possible. That is, as Marcel has pointed out, hope must be an active combat against despair. In another text, Marcel completes that thought: “Hope means first accepting the trial as an integral part of the self; but while so doing it considers it as destined to be absorbed and transmuted by the inner workings of a certain creative process.”

A dominant theme of Sacred History is the revelation that theological hope in no way guarantees immunity from despair in this life. Without losing any of its authenticity hope can be lived, in fact must be lived, in two dimensions, combining all the elements which attach it both to heaven and to earth. Chesterton expressed it all very simply when he said in *Heretics*: “Until we see the background of darkness we cannot admire the light. Until we picture nonentity we underrate the victory of God. Hope means hoping when all things are hopeless or it is no virtue at all. Pessimism is the very basis of optimism.”

This explains the presence of despair in the Catholic novelist. He finds himself in the position of having greater reason to despair than anyone else. His supernatural hope sharpens his vision of the tragedy of this world but it does not protect him against it. There is no guilt in despairing of a life which through sin is bound to be extinguished in the end. “Grace,” Hans Urs von Balthasar observes, “is permission to partake in the anguish of Christ.” Hope, we have been told, is a “memory of the future” which bids us hold fast in restlessness, in dissatisfaction and in anguish during the dark night of the present.

By pushing back to the basic antinomies of human destiny—faith-doubt, life-death, anxiety-courage, isolation-community, guilt-forgiveness, suffering-love—the literature of despair has recast in contemporary terms the original drama and reminded us of the eschatological dimension of existence. In particular, its emphasis upon personal commitment and the creative value of suffering constitutes a sharp indictment of the Christian conscience grown somewhat lax in these matters.

One cannot escape the conclusion that the literature of despair adds an important commentary to the redemptive history of mankind. It is the voice of a world that cries out with Faust: “Give me back my soul!” It is, and I think we would be very callous indeed to deny it, the anguished prayer of Job, asking the why and wherefore of life. And Job's prayer was answered.

Where does a modern man turn in his
search for a program of spiritual reading?

In Quest of God

by GERARD S. SLOYAN

LANGUAGE should be the sacrament of the idea, but when language is ill chosen it stands as a barrier between the idea and the knower. This is the perennial problem to be faced in the consideration of spiritual writings.

In the early nineteenth century an evangelical synod in Philadelphia took action against the use of English translations of the Bible on the ground that this weak and unmusical tongue could not bear the splendid weight of God's word. How, they asked, could the strong and heartwarming concept of the divine *Barmherzigkeit* ever be conveyed by such a colorless and puling word as "mercy"?

Emotion plays its part in how much a word or a phrase will say to a man. In an essay on the Revised Standard Version of the New Testament (1946), Edgar J. Goodspeed, a member of the revision committee, remarks of the 1941 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine revision of that part of the Bible by Catholics, "The result of this simple change ["ye" to "you" throughout the Sermon on the Mount] is to add immensely to the vigor of the Sermon. It seems to speak to us so much more directly and forcibly. To that extent it speaks our language. The same version has abandoned the quaint forms of the third person, goeth, seeketh, findeth, and the like, and substituted the familiar modern forms, goes, seeks, finds. This too results in increased vigor." Yet Goodspeed's colleague in producing large portions of *The Complete Bible, An American Translation* (better known as the "Chicago Bible" because of its University connection), Theophile J. Meek, remarks of the Confraternity translation of the Psalms: "throughout the translation God is addressed as 'you,' in exactly the same way as man is addressed. But it is not common practice with us to address God as 'you,' and this must offend many ears. It is true that Hebrew does not differentiate between the two, but both God and man are addressed as 'thou,' and never as 'you.' In translating one should be careful to express in his own idiom what his author was expressing in his, and here the regular English usage is to address God differently from man." (*Catholic Bib-*

lical Quarterly, July, 1956, 18: 314). Increase of vigor or no, Dr. Meek is surely convinced of a loss of effectiveness for him.

This problem is not one of small but of great consequences in the specific area I should like to discuss, namely the attention paid by modern literate man to the practice of spiritual reading. I shall not go on the shallow assumption that if all language barriers are removed the Pauline epistles will recommend themselves as readily as Hemingway, or St. Augustine as the *Saturday Evening Post*. Obviously it is not so. A whole mentality on the things of sense and the things of spirit is in question. A person must first arrive at the point where he does not put aside a treatise on the spiritual life the moment he discovers the writer's intention. There is a certain further degree of mental refinement and supernatural awareness, arrived at by some, which ensures that they will quest after divine truth wherever it is to be found and despite what obstacles. If the seeker is a reader he will read things that are above his natural capabilities because he desires the end, which is closer union with God. Non-readers (I refer to the reading habit rather than the power to read) become readers simply because they have discovered that some of the secrets of the Kingdom are contained between the covers of books.

You see them occasionally in the great public libraries, sometimes threadbare and exhausted. One reading-room patron will be laboriously piecing out sentences on astrology and another poring over the techniques of world revolution, but over in the corner some unprepossessing fellow in workingman's clothes will be reading Suso or St. John of the Cross. Each of the three is convinced where his treasure lies, and because his heart follows it he is doing everything in his power to come in possession of it. I will not easily forget a conversation I had in a lumberyard in Claremorris, County Mayo, with a workman who after a fairly brief acquaintance wanted my view on the works of Père Lamy. Or the city fireman who once gave me a ride on the streets of Bloomfield, New Jersey, and asked me what St. Paul meant in the famous passage in the fourth chapter of I Thessalonians by: "we who are still left alive (shall) be taken up into the clouds."

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A CERTAIN amount of spiritual reading will go on in every age, but the likelihood is greater in proportion as the thirst is keener and the existence and location of the well-water is known. There must be an equation, too, between the dipper and the mouth. Renée Haynes observed in *Blackfriars* not long ago (December, 1955) that learning to read is not at all the same thing as learning to understand, and that steps should be taken to see that remarks addressed to the educated are not taken up and interpreted by the simply literate. In spiritual reading the problem is to bring suitable works to the attention of the literate, who are many, that they may swell the ranks of the spiritually educated, who are few. The English writer warned against verbal allergies as something "particularly common and virulent in English." A list of her own followed: "grace" in the plural as "graces"; "amiable" as applied to Our Lady; and "clients" and "patrons" and "favours," with all the flattery and corruption the words suggest, in connection with Saints.

There can be found in any era souls whose love for God is such that they will catch sight of His back like Moses, even through the filter of verbal murk. And there are probably some who will be as much won by treacly religiosity in prose as by the Reality it describes. "Verbal allergies" to others are as mother's milk to them. Yet the general run of men will gravitate to a clean and cliché-free style of writing which does not hesitate to be strong in imagery even while it clothes the sublime. There will always be an attraction to higher doctrine exerted by spiritual writing which avoids hieratic language and speaks in the language men use, provided the content is lofty enough. St. Thomas More had such a style as that. He was a man who could write, in his *Dialogue of Comfort against Tribulation*: "Yea, cousin, but many men are there with whom God is not content! For they abuse this great high goodness of his, whom neither fair treating nor hard handling can cause to remember their maker." Again he describes those "men in a maze" who in their serving of the flesh do daily engage with the devil called Business (More has been punning on Busyness): "Go they never so full-fed to bed, yet evermore on the morrow, as new they are to be fed again as they were the day before. Thus fareth it by the belly; thus fareth it by those parts which are beneath the belly. And as for covetousness, it fareth like the fire—the more wood there cometh to it, the more fervent and the more greedy it is." A man can read that sublimely serious observation and understand it. There is one preliminary problem. He must first hear of it. It must be available to him as part of his ordinary reading fare.

Without question Scripture reading comes first in a Christian's diet, and always has. The monk Aelfric of Eynsham (c.1000), who provided interlinear English paraphrases and translations of numerous Old Testa-

ment books to supplement the Anglo-Saxon Gospels of Bede and others, said of the written word: "Whoever would be one with God, must often and often read the Holy Scriptures. For when we pray we speak to God; and when we read the Bible God speaks to us. As the body is nourished by natural food, so the sublimer man, that is the soul, is nourished by the divine saying, according to the words of the Psalmist: 'How sweet are thy words unto my taste, yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth.' Happy is he who reads the Scriptures, if he convert the words into actions."

Reading in Latin was largely confined to clerics in Aelfric's day and reading in any language to an educated minority, but Psalters and other parts of the Bible flourished in French and English as we come on to Wyclif's time. Says a Cambridge University manuscript, according to Hugh Pope: "Summe ther ben that kunnen rede but little, or noght understonde, and for hen ben ordent bookis of her moder tongue . . . to Ytaliens bokis of Latin corrupt, to Duche men bokis Duche, to Engliche men bokis of Engliche; in whiche bokis thei mowen rede to konne God and his lawe . . . (it) is leful to christeyn peple (to) rede and connen holy Scripture, in destruction of synne and in cresynge of vertu, it is opyne in many placis of Goddis lawe, both old and newe."

Not only is it "leful" to read the Scriptures but an absolute necessity if any edifice of spirituality is to be erected by means of the sacrament of the word. The Bible in competent translation is not one item among others in a program of spiritual reading. It is foundation, walls and roof-tree all in one of the house that divine Wisdom has built herself.

She has dressed her meat, mixed her wine
yes, she has spread her table . . .
Come, eat of my food,
and drink of the wine I have mixed! . . .
Forsake foolishness that you may live;
advance in the way of understanding.

(Prov. 9, 2 & 5)

Wisdom is a gift to be found in myriad guises in the Bible; poetry clothes her, narrative shows her, bloodshed cries out in testimony to her, Shekinah and Resurrection vindicate her. . . . "In whiche bokis thei mowen rede to konne God and his lawe."

ASIDE FROM the homilies of the Church Fathers the chief non-Scriptural reading of the early monastic fraternity consisted of ascetical treatises directed to monks, like the rules of Basil and Benedict, *The Ascetic Life* of Maximus the Confessor and Gregory of Nyssa's *Christian Rule of Life* (*De instituto christiano*). The four treatises and ten letters of the sixth century Pseudo-Areopagite, whose name is confused with that of Denis the apostle of Paris though the author claimed to be St. Paul's convert (Acts

17, 34), served as a matrix for most of the ascetical writing of the West for at least eight centuries. This is chiefly true of his *Mystical Theology*. A less exalted type of spirituality in far more common use was that contained in the various manuals which exhorted to Christian perfection in a particular state, as for example Alcuin *On The Virtues and Vices* addressed to Wido of Marca Britanniae (c.800) on how to be a good soldier, or the more general *Libellus exhortatorius* of Paulinus of Aquileia.

There is a *Handbook (Liber manualis)* of Dodena or Dhuoda, wife of Bernard of Septimania, dated 841-43, addressed to her sons in the hope that they will have a mirror-image of her near when she is far from them. "Son, you will have teachers who will teach you from better documents and completer ones; but not on the same terms as I your mother, in whose breast there burns an ardent love." She hopes for each boy that from the Cross the graces of "Jesus of Nazareth, Son of God, will flow down like the dew of Hermon to Sion, or the oil from Aaron's brow down onto his beard." She pleads with her son to have the Sacrifice of the Mass offered frequently, she warns him to lift his heart on high in the midst of earthly pleasures, she proposes for his use morning and evening prayers: "Although I lie still for a bit, may it be in the sleep of peace. And should I wake, may I experience Thee near to guard me, who appeared to blessed Jacob as a Savior on the ladder."

The twelfth century witnessed the immense popularity of a layman's handbook which bravely called itself a "summary of all Christian theology," the *Elucidarium* attributed to Honorius of Autun but probably the work of an unknown disciple of St. Anselm. It was a mixture of sound doctrine, doubtful typology and censorious moralism, and its influence on Christian spirituality cannot be overestimated. The *devotio moderna* of the Low Countries in the late medieval period was in some sense the successor to a variety of such "elucidaries" and "septenaries" (teaching by lists of seven), though far less catechetical in intent than they.

The mystical writers Hildegard and Mechtild had been oriented in a Pseudo-Dionysian direction. With the *Imitatio Christi*, the *Evangelical Pearl*, and the *Little Garden of Devotion* of the Lowlands there came a less speculative and more down-to-earth approach to the problems of perfection. The anti-intellectualism of these treatises, as much in revolt against the swollen pride of the New Learning as against the learning itself, is often remarked. More characteristic still is their insistence on a knowledge of self, on God and the soul as the only great realities, on the grandeur yet weakness of the human spirit. Though written by religious brothers and for them, these treatises made an immense appeal to layfolk in an era which had lately

witnessed crusades, war and pestilence, and would shortly see the assured fate of the individual soul become identified as religion's great question. Lorenzo Scupoli's *Spiritual Combat* (d. 1610) followed in that stream, to beget in turn the *Introduction to a Devout Life* of St. François de Sales and his treatise *On The Love of God*.

WHERE DOES a modern man turn if he wishes to embark on a program of spiritual reading? He begins and ends with the Bible in good translation, armed with an absolutely necessary minimum of instructive commentary. He turns next to the Missal, for he cannot hope to be successful in prayer as an individual unless he knows how one prays as a member of the worshipping Christ. For this knowledge in our day a familiarity with the periodical *Worship* is uniquely valuable as a corrective against any attempted states of prayer not firmly rooted in a corporate Eucharistic life. He then turns to whatever masters of the spiritual life speak to *him*, without regard to their success over the ages in speaking to others. Ultimately he will come to the giants simply because they are giants—though the unique appeal of one or another may escape him forever. The "verbal allergies" are real and may provide permanent barriers.

Sometimes the position is taken that all attempts at spiritual writing other than the great classics are so many leaves for the burning. While this statement will frequently be true enough for the one who makes it, it cannot become true for all others by simple fiat. Half a lifetime of spiritual experience has gone into validating an individual's claim for the total sufficiency of Augustine, Bernard, Teresa and a few others. There are many souls interested in divine things who need to walk before they can run, and first of all to stand erect. This fact points up the excellence of writers like Trese, Knox and Van Zeller who have the special gift of discussing eternal truths as if they had relevance to modern lives. They are never vulgar but at the same time never out of touch with the common run of men and their problems. Spiritual reading is an intensely personal thing, and these writers address themselves to persons.

Merton, Guardini and Graham are at another, subtler level of performance. Yet because the treatment of spirituality of the first two of them at least is not directly theological it needs complementing from two modern writers, each a Benedictine abbot, the one a master of Pauline doctrine and the other perhaps the most successful popularizer of the Thomist theological revival: Dom Marmion of Maredsous and Dom Vonier of Buckfast. None of those above named is identified with a "school" of spirituality. If one does not mind a partisan flavor to distinctly high spiritual doctrine he may turn to Garrigou-Lagrange.

What is to be said of the mystics? Where does one look for them, assuming that he is neither frightened off by the word nor out for some mental titillation which he can use as a conversation piece? He could scarcely do better than look into H. A. Reinhold's collection *The Soul Afire* (in England, *The Spear of Gold*) which provides not only excerpts from the writings of mystics, but some of the scriptural and liturgical texts by which mystics are made. The translations are in many cases freshly done, and even if some of the selections are disappointingly brief there is a good list of printed sources provided to help one go in search. There is also *The Book of Christian Classics* which Michael Williams edited almost twenty-five years ago, containing longer selections than those given by Reinhold. Ruysbroek, Law, Jeremy Taylor and Lancelot Andrewes are represented, as well as many of the writers already named. In most cases better translations are now available than Williams then had at his disposal.

It is a matter of some satisfaction that there are now two quarterly periodicals of spiritual theology in this country not specifically designed for persons in religion, *Cross and Crown* and the more recent *Spiritual Life*. The English publication *The Life of the Spirit* antedates them both and is more at ease than either. There is still a certain air of stiffness about the two American journals. This may be because they are

concerned, after all, with the science of the saints and not with random remarks on holiness. They should not be begrudged their terminology, which is the property of the spiritually proficient—or of those at least who know about these things. In general, spiritual writers themselves, even the mystics, are a simpler lot. Says Blessed John Tauler, for example: "Even if all teachers were dead and all books were burned, the holy life of Christ would still be teaching enough for us." And Mechtild of Magdeburg: "I shall place the candle in the holder, and a beam of knowledge will shine into all eyes that see it from afar." Who shall be the holder and who the candle? And the Lord said: 'I am the light and the holder is your heart.'"

There must be some reader of these lines struck by the omission of some favorite. ("Not a word about de Caussade!") Patience. Five years ago it was impossible to buy *Seeds of Contemplation* along with a package of cigarettes, or to pick up Augustine's *Confessions* from the druggist who had just filled the baby's prescription. "When one is looking for a thing (says Meister Eckhart) and finds no trace of it, one hunts half-heartedly and in distress. But lighting on some vestige of the quarry, the chase grows lively and keen. The man in quest of fire, cheered when he feels the heat, looks for its source with eagerness and pleasure, and so it is with those in quest of God."

"The New Class"

Djilas As Prophet

by GUNNAR D. KUMLIEN

IS COMMUNISM changing? Is it going to change to such an extent that what will emerge in the future cannot be called Communism?

These seem now to be the great questions, independent of the rising or subsiding tensions between the two blocs in the world, and they were asked again and again by foreign observers in Moscow as the first world reactions to Milovan Djilas's already famous book *The New Class* arrived there. According to Djilas the Communist ideology is dead and what has survived is merely a new ruling class with more power than any in history, but otherwise without ideals, cynical and eager only to enjoy its absolute power and immense riches.

Mr. Kumlien, *The Commonwealth's* regular correspondent in Rome, has been traveling in Eastern Europe and the U.S.S.R.

In his book Djilas says: The era of the great Communist leaders is passed. The new class has nothing more to tell the masses. Maybe mankind will one day marvel at the great achievements of Communism, but it will be ashamed of the means which were used. A world center for Communism does not exist any more. The unity of world Communism is destroyed.

Wherever and whenever possible I tried Djilas's thesis on the Russian Communists I talked to, big or small, in order to provoke a reaction. The reaction could roughly be summed up thus: we have heard all that before; Trotsky said something very similar. At the same time their interest in Djilas was obvious, in spite of the fact that they tried to conceal it.

During my discussions with Russian Communists, I often intentionally raised questions about other Com-

munist countries, and the destroyed unity of world Communism could not have been more eloquently illustrated than by their reactions. The fact is the Communist parties in the different Communist countries are getting more and more touchy on nationalistic issues and less and less inclined to admit that they have borrowed anything from other Communist states.

When I asked Russian Communists whether the present decentralization in the U.S.S.R. was inspired by earlier and similar decentralization in Tito's Yugoslavia, they were offended and snapped that the U.S.S.R. has no need to imitate any foreign country. In the same way, Polish, Yugoslav or Chinese Communists are less and less willing to recognize that they have followed one another's example and above all the example of the Soviet Union, formerly acknowledged as leader and model. This applies even to cases where the imitations appear to be obvious. The explanations are always the same: the similarities are purely accidental, determined by events far back in the history of each country, or at least within the Communist movement in each country.

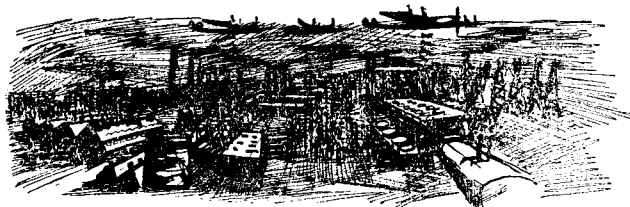
One of the reasons for this attitude seems to be a sort of self-defense. It is necessary for the "new class" to defend itself against pressures from the people for more liberalization on the ground that these liberalizations have been realized in other Communist countries. In other words, such movements are used as ideologically safe precedents, and the masses are surprisingly quick to seize upon them. The Yugoslavs, for instance, think that they have less internal freedom than the Poles at present, and the Poles on their side think that they are more bound to the U.S.S.R. than the Yugoslavs. Why shouldn't the Poles enjoy the same independence of the U.S.S.R. as the Yugoslavs. And why shouldn't the Yugoslavs enjoy the same internal freedom as the Poles?

The peculiar conditions prevailing in China have also proved to be useful as precedents of this sort in many European Communist countries. And it is not easy for the Communist parties to defend against this kind of successive decomposition. There is always some Communist country which in some field has liberalized more. There is always some Communist country where a new book or magazine article can be cited to prove that writers and artists enjoy more freedom under other Communist regimes.

IS IT still appropriate to call Communism what emerges out of all this? Is it Communism when collectivization has apparently failed both in Poland and Yugoslavia? And from the viewpoint of the Russian Communists the "kulaks" or farmers with their own land have won out in both countries. Is it Communism when the Church has won concessions such as it has in Poland? The Stalinists say no and quote Lenin, who

said that as long as the farmers have not all been compelled to join the collective farms, capitalism will inevitably rise again, and if religion is not fought, the masses will poison themselves again with the "opium of the people."

According to the Stalinists, what is happening now is a reversion to capitalism. And from a purely doctrinal point of view their position seems strong. But at the same time they seem steadily to lose ground practically everywhere.



The "national" Communists reply to the questions above that what was formerly called Communism was not Communism at all, but a distortion of it, which they call "the cult of the individual." According to them it is only now that true Communism is emerging. At the same time they try to prove that national Communism is not anything new, but only the organic development of what existed before the deprecated "cult of the individual."

In Poland, for example, all this has given rise to the following characteristic joke. Capitalism, it goes, is an old suit, but one which fits extraordinarily well, is warm, and never seems to be worn out. Communism is a brand new suit, smartly cut and beautifully colored, but which unfortunately exists only in the pages of a fashion magazine.

One has the impression that the rulers in the U.S.S.R. might be willing to make any kind *volte-face*, on condition only that they save face, i.e., that it can be said officially that the new position is an organic evolution of what existed before the "cult of the individual." (The name of Stalin is only mentioned exceptionally, almost as if it were something indecent.)

Djilas says in *The New Class* that after the revolutionary period of Lenin followed the dogmatic period of Stalin, to be followed in its turn by the present non-dogmatic period. And the new ruling class does in fact seem undogmatic to the point that it might accept any dogmatic compromise, even a return by degrees to some sort of capitalism, so long as it is officially labeled Communism, and so long as the class as such is able to keep its power and wealth.

Djilas emphasizes that Communism, which was supposed to lead to a classless society, has in fact led to a tyranny by one small class unparalleled in history. He emphasizes that through this strange divorcement of theory and reality, *le pays légal* and *le pays réel*, a sort of pathological lying has become normal. Com-

BOOKS

FOR BROTHERHOOD

This Books for Brotherhood list includes books of general interest in the field of intergroup relations published during 1957 and late 1956. The books are chosen from among the many published during the period not for the information about any particular religious group, but because they do most to promote understanding among various groups. The list is the result of unanimous agreement by a representative committee with wide experience in evaluating books, on their recommendations of the best in the field, for children, young people, and adults.

ELIZABETH D. NORRIS
Librarian, Paula K. Lazrus
Memorial Library, NCCJ

This selection from the complete list
is presented by the publishers named below

ADULT LIST

Deadline, by Paul Darcy Boles. Macmillan, \$3.75.

Against the stormy background of a crisis in his personal life, George Case, nationally famous as the editor of one of America's greatest papers in the South, takes cognizance of his obligation to speak out, for conscience' sake, on the matter of desegregation. In what is a packed period of action and examination, he achieves a climactic resolution of his problem in triumph and bodily defeat.

Drum: the Newspaper that Won the Heart of Africa, by Anthony Sampson. Houghton, \$3.50.

The white editor of a Negro newspaper in South Africa looks into the heart and mind of the new Africa; a tremendous impact is achieved through an unusual mixture of Cockney gaiety, African idiom, and the grim portrayal of native dignity and squalor.

The Interplay of East and West, by Barbara Ward. Norton, \$3.50.

These lectures delivered at McGill University bring fresh insights to the past relationship of East and West, and show us how we may, indeed must, discover together a moral unity without which political and economic unity can have no basis for permanence.

Islam in Modern History, by Wilfred Cantwell Smith. Princeton University Press, \$6.00.

Offering a significant contribution to inter-cultural interpretation, this study of the present day followers of Islam, the Arabs, Turks, Pakistanis, and Indian Muslims, analyzes the conflicts created by an ancient faith forced to come to grips with a modern world.

The Small Woman, by Alan Burgess. Dutton, \$3.95.

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This slender volume might be an encyclopedia of immigrant achievement. The sixteen fact-filled essays treat an equal number of nationals who have given America of their heart and brain, as well as of their loyalty. The chapters on the Negro and the Japanese are especially significant.

300,000 New Americans, by Lyman C. White. Harper, \$4.00.

The story of the United Services for New Americans, its ministry to 300,000 displaced and political refugees, mostly Jewish, who have come to America over the last twenty years, and its contribution to the immense task of their resettlement and integration into the life of the new homeland.

With All Deliberate Speed, edited by Don Shoemaker. Harper, \$3.50.

The three turbulent years of desegregation as it has proceeded in the South since 1954 are here recorded in an objective, journalistic report written by staff members and associates of the Southern Education Reporting Service.

Race and Culture Contacts in the Modern World, by E. Franklin Frazier. Knopf, \$5.75.

A sociological resource for two centuries of racial and cultural phenomena throughout the world.

The World's Great Religions, by the Editors of Life. Time (Trade distribution by Simon & Schuster), \$13.50.

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Reach for a Star, by Florence C. Means. Houghton, \$3.00, 12-14.

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Singing Holidays, by Oscar Brand. Knopf, \$5.95, 9 and over.

Ninety folk songs from America's diverse and rich cultural background that tie in with thirty American holidays.

munism in practice seems always to reach something opposite to what officially it is striving for. And the pathological atmosphere of lies in which it lives is such that more lies no longer matter. Theory and practice are so remote from each other that there is no longer any relationship between them.

THERE ARE observers from the West in Moscow who ask themselves whether Russian Communism has not after all succeeded only in creating better conditions for the return to some sort of capitalism. Huge public works have been achieved, like the canal system, the dams, the power stations, and heavy industry has been pushed. The price for all this has of course been incomparably much higher than it would have been in a capitalist regime, but maybe only a dictatorship, they say, would have been able to achieve all this.

The fact that illiteracy has been almost completely eliminated means that not only is there a will to assimilate Western ideas, but better technical possibilities of doing so than ever before. Indeed, even the fact that collectivization of the land has really been achieved in the U.S.S.R. is not considered by these observers to make impossible a return in practice to some sort of capitalism. Small farms have in many countries proved less efficient than the big industrialized farms of the type represented in some areas of the United States. Yet if such a drift towards capitalism should come about, it would not necessarily mean an easing of tension in the world. The two power-blocs would continue to compete as before. The Red Army would remain as strong as before. Even the Communist parties in the West might remain for some time at least. In practice it might mean only a strengthening of the Soviet bloc. And the West would be deprived of many of its best arguments against the Soviet system.

Djilas emphasizes the incredible inefficiency and wastefulness of the Communist production system, which in the long run makes it more and more difficult to compete with the capitalist West, where production costs are so much lower and the quality of the output so much higher. He emphasized the trend in the U.S.S.R. to push certain branches of research and production to the utmost, separately from the rest of the economy and regardless of cost. Examples are the army, atomic research, heavy industry and intercontinental missiles, which have recently had such an enormous propaganda impact all over the world.

The intention is to compete with the West in these fields and if possible to surpass it, at the same time as the general standard of living very often is lower even than in many of the most underdeveloped countries in the West. The system is like a landscape with sky-high peaks and between them yawning chasms. One has only to travel outside Moscow, still within sight

of its skyscrapers, to meet a misery comparable with the misery in southern Italy or in the most depressed areas in Spain or Greece. And the further from the center, the greater the misery.

There is an old Scandinavian tale about the peasant girl who lost her way in the woods and was caught by the trolls, the legendary beings conceived as giants, dwarfs or imps who live underground. She lived many years as a prisoner of the trolls, longing for a return to the sunny world of the human beings. But she did not know that every year in the world of the trolls corresponded to ten years among humans, and when she finally managed to escape, she hardly recognized the world she had left, to such a point had it changed and evolved.

It is not unusual to meet Russians now who have, without ever having been there, a surprisingly detailed *theoretical* knowledge of the West. Obviously they have assimilated all the literature on the West available in the U.S.S.R. But their knowledge of the West has strange and unexpected gaps, corresponding to the Soviet censorship. If during the conversation the Kinsey report is mentioned, for instance, they ask: Who is Kinsey? If psychoanalysis is mentioned, they ask: What is psychoanalysis? Who is Salvador Dali? What is "calypso"? And so on.

They are as if returned from a long absence far away. Like the peasant girl in the old tale, they are emerging slowly from the underground where they have been prisoners for so long. They are beginning to realize that things have changed much faster than they imagined down below.

MARY TO THE DEAD CHRIST

The hands of many magdalenes
anointed you for Sanhedrins
to paradox—centurions

to flog impervious and scar
and hoist suspended to the stars
at noon like flesh to minotaurs.

Your eyes averted to the sponge
found me before the spearman's lunge
drew blood and water at the plunge

of lance and left a skewered thief
to lift his broken legs for life
or death by scimitar, by knife.

You were betrayable to thorn,
whip-sufferable when born,
my javelined and cruciform.

SAMUEL J. HAZO.

NO MODEST PROPOSAL

THE FABULOUSLY successful *Look* has long had the last word on just about everything, if only because it has waited until everybody else had his say before speaking. Waiting is part of the *Look* recipe for success. The magazine does not, for instance, make celebrities as the Luce publications do, but no one can equal it when it comes to squeezing the last drop out of the fame or notoriety other periodicals have created. You can be sure that after an Elvis Presley or Marilyn Monroe is as familiar to every literate American as his own mate *Look* will appear with something like "The Real Elvis Presley Story" or "Marilyn Monroe—the True Story of Her Fight for Fame." The *real* and the *true* turn out to be what readers of *Silver Screen* knew all along, but that seems not to faze *Look*.

In its current issue *Look* has finally gotten around to the subject of conformity in American life. This was hot stuff in such avant-garde circles as *Fortune* about four years ago, and in the meantime William H. Whyte's book *The Organization Man* and David Riesman's *Lonely Crowd* have become study-group staples. But the article in *Look* makes it official: conformity is a bad thing and now anyone who wants to belong, *really* belong, must be opposed to it.

A fine time to tell us, after all the ranch-style homes have been built, the supervised-play programs outlined for years ahead and report cards with space for comments on how well Junior adjusts to the group have been printed by the million. Most people had just about succeeded in conforming and were finally beginning to feel adjusted to the peas-in-a-pod way of life and along comes *Look* to tell that it just won't *do*. Did it ever occur to *Look* that it is not easy to conform to non-conformity after a certain age? But I suppose *Look* would answer that it is only facing up to life. No matter how much you have done about "togetherness," or what compliments you have received on how well your kindergartner "shares," or how proud you are because you made just the proper number of phallic identifications in your Rorschach—it is all behind you now.

So what do we do? How do we un-conform? How do we express enough individualism to be chic? Do our teenagers have to cancel their subscriptions to *Seventeen*? Should American housewives avoid supermarkets because they know they can not resist clever packaging and will continue to indulge in the impulse-buying mass manipulators count on? Should we stop buying the new model cars if the old one is still running well? Should we tear down the identical rows of suburban housing? Should American fashion editors boycott the Paris showings? Should we start being

satisfied with the nameless but "ordinary" toothbrushes, deodorants, refrigerators and paper napkins that are advertised on television only as horrible examples of shoddy American workmanship? Should *Look* give Norman Vincent Peale his walking papers?

It is all right to be chic and up-to-date and all that, but de-conforming ourselves is not going to be as easy as it sounds. For one thing it will upset our economy. What happens to the automobile industry if we start buying cars only when we actually need them and don't give a fig about fins? What will happen to the dress business if women just say no, they are not having any part of the chemise? Without conformity what will happen to those big fat ads in the slick magazines? What indeed will happen to the magazines themselves? Does *Look* know what kind of dynamite it is playing with?

Suppose we all dropped the Book-of-the-Month club and told Clifton Fadiman to peddle his papers, we'd pick out our own reading. That would be non-conformist all right, but what would it do to the publishing industry? Americans might actually start reading *old* books—a fine how-do-you-do for Bennett Cerf.

I am afraid that we would have to get a whole new concept of public relations. Instead of merely finding out what the public wants, the p.r. men would have to start selling the public on what is good for it. This would mean a veritable revolution on Madison Avenue.

Just think what an era of non-conformity would do to education. For one thing no one would go to college merely because it was the thing to do; students would go because they wanted to study. All the snap courses now in the catalogue because they are sought after by students who would really prefer to be almost anywhere else, would be eliminated. No one would pick a college because it had a famous football name or for any other reason than that it was a seat of learning. Benefactions would go for education alone.

And advertising! Out would go not only consent-engineering and synthetic obsolescence but even the principle of identification. No one would smoke Chesterfield cigarettes because they are Frank Sinatra's brand or buy Calvert's because men of distinction drink it—and tell us, *Look*, what plans do you have for Betty Furness?

Look itself would be seriously affected. The editors must know that if the principle of conformity were removed from American life, they would suffer more than most. *Look* might end up looking like the *New Republic* or *Partisan Review*. No, I do not believe *Look* has thought this one through. If conformity goes, we all do.

JOHN COGLEY.

THE STAGE

THE DISGUISES OF LOVE

IT IS AN IRONY of Mr. Roy Lawler's bitter comedy, and one indeed which its disabused author might relish, that "Summer of the 17th Doll" (*at the Coronet*) may be broken commercially on what was to have been its *raison d'être*. Mr. Lawler's rueful investigation of the disguises of love is the first Australian drama of consequence, and with a kind of fierce national pride, it has been sent about the English-speaking world all intact. This enforces some purity of actuality, it is true, but allows an obscure confusion as well, for the supreme irony of "Summer of the 17th Doll" is that in no unique nor, shall one say, biological way, does it draw on a specific Australian substance. Idiosyncrasies aside—and among these, we must include working class Australian dialect, a speech abrasive and unlovely, to which no beauty of sheer sound

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would ever seem possible—the play is a restatement, with its own dominating potency, of themes and experience which have blooded the American imagination for decades. The British, who mark often—and often with a light fleck—the congruence of American and Australian temperaments, may have read the pattern more shrewdly than they know.

None of which need imply any lesion of originality, but is only to place "Summer of the 17th Doll" within a due scale and proportion of knowledge—to relieve it of the singular burden of the exotic, as if a kangaroo were loping about Times Square. Mr. Lawler, in truth, brings a great security of gift to his material: wholeness of sensibility and a deep masculine insistence. His quality is seen to advantage in the light of his American peers, all of whom work a comparable vein. He has some of Mr. Arthur Miller's dogged thrust, but a more acute ear and less doctrinaire social egotism; he shares with Odets the picturesque homeliness of the actual, and some wry delight in that, and there is a not inconsiderable affinity with Mr. Paddy Chayefsky: similar milieux, similar closeness and wit of perception, that same hovering tenderness—though here at a more austere removal—and altogether less smartness, less panicky clutching at tidy moralisms and therapies.

It is perhaps, and oddly, Mr. Tennessee Williams who is suggested by "Summer of the 17th Doll," though a Williams blunt-fingered and indifferent to any aspiration of wider statement. Mr. Lawler's symbolism is pervasive yet not indulged, and he has a genuine instinct—rare in our theatre of the moment—for the image of resonance. If his variation of the Williams theme—indeed the theme of all literature, that of illusion and reality—marks no significant advance, it shows nonetheless a most impressive confidence in its own truth. This refusal of Mr. Lawler's to evade the cost of things with a vague poetic deliquescence is a mark of his staying power as an artist; where "Death of a Salesman" and "A Streetcar Named Desire," for all their sagacities, attack, bold demands upon art and life, wobble ultimately into vacillation, "Summer of the 17th Doll" drives through to its short, harsh lucidities with a brutal exactitude. It is this at the last—together with such fierce precision of ensemble playing—that one honors most in the Australian achievement: a certain unalterable finality of vision, however painful; ideas and images of value always committed, never small.

MR. WILLIAM GIBSON, in "Two for the Seesaw" (*at the Booth*), works within the limits of tour de force: four boards, two people, passion and a telephone compose his theatre. An air of the factitious oppresses at first, nor does the disharmonious nature of Mr. Gibson's lovers diminish this. The man, in Mr. Henry Fonda's tight, lean, elegantly monochromatic

performance, is a sulky lawyer smashed about by the rancors of a divorce; the girl is a hybrid of Bronx, ballet and bedlam—one of those tartars who belt you as you aim for a seat in the subway—and she speaks that ferociously sui-generis lingo which is my city's contribution to international folklore. (She would be a fantasy—the tramp with the heart of gold—had not the dramatist seen her with the richer eye of love.) Mr. Gibson imagines for these two some moments of tenderness, and after that, the deluge: will and insistence, humiliation, things broken with venomous glee—not least, pride and the heart—recrimination, evasion, reconciliation, *you are not on my side*. It bears everywhere the testimony of first-hand experience, and it induces, with faithful squalor, a remembered exhaustion.

Then, in his last act, Mr. Gibson elevates sentiment to a dignity at once clear and calm. After all the smears of egotism about being *wanted*, being *needed*, his lovers do learn something about the nature of their grave enterprise. The recognition is full of charm, and it is marked with a delicate, affecting security. Elsewhere, I fear, "Two for the Seesaw" lacks what one must helplessly call spiritual austerity: which is to say that Mr. Gibson is not yet Daudet, nor Colette, and must still learn to record the terrible things about love—more terrible, indeed, than he has imagined—with an

intensity born more of art than life. I boggle, too, at confessing what may seem a personal failure of sensibility: that I cannot imagine the possibility of this liaison, cannot admit its deep upheavals of feeling. The divide, of class, of mind, of reference, of all but sexuality, seems so absolute . . . or is this but a vulgar limitation? Mr. Wolcott Gibbs, who interrupted his fastidious yawn long enough to rise to criticism, joins me in this reservation, but I am not sure of happiness in that company. There can be, in any event, no doubt that Miss Anne Bancroft's performance as this enigmatic creature is witty, fluent and terrifying.

RICHARD HAYES.

THE SCREEN

THE SOPHIST AND THE SOPHOMORE

ONLY rabid Graham Greene fans will object strenuously to the changes Producer-director-writer Joseph L. Mankiewicz made in filming "The Quiet American." Others will probably agree that the Mankiewicz-Greene combination is a pretty happy one. The movie, less of a parable than the book, limits the anti-American cracks almost entirely to the

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speeches of Fowler, the world-weary English journalist who is covering the war in Indo-China in 1952. Fowler is by no means reticent in expressing his annoyance at the meddling, naive American. The quiet American (who no longer has a name), is a young graduate student in political science who dreams about a Third Force in this war between French Colonialism and Communism; however he does not, as in the book, represent the American Government; he is working for a private aid mission and determined to do-good.

More interested in a good story and in character (especially that of the Englishman driven by jealousy into conniving against the American), Mankiewicz does not neglect politics and symbols. At times his movie even stops moving and just stands still to let the characters argue. The dialogue (part Greene, part Mankiewicz) is often brilliant, and as exciting as the action, of which Mankiewicz gives us plenty when he's so disposed. The film was beautifully photographed, mostly in Viet Nam, and *not* in Technicolor or CinemaScope. The cast, chosen with utmost care, respond perfectly to Mankiewicz's direction.

Michael Redgrave is superb as the English correspondent—calmly superior, carefully not taking sides or becoming involved, cynically looking down his nose at the bungling of the American, especially with Phuong, the Englishman's Vietnamese mistress. And

Audie Murphy, as the American, radiates good will, the best of intentions toward Phuong and all the seriousness of a healthy Boy Scout when he saves the Englishman from the Communists as the two men are returning from the Cao daist religious festival. Newcomer Giorgia Moll is lovely as the flower-like Phuong, whose devotion to Fowler is unlimited—until she switches her affections to the American.

As Inspector Vigot of the Saigon Sûreté, Claude Dauphin gives a most impressive portrayal of a wise policeman who knows his business, knows how to play cat-and-mouse, and knows how to strip Fowler of his intellectual pretense. The final scenes between these two men are splendid: the Frenchman, now calm and cool, sees through the Englishman and how he allowed his passion, jealousy and fear of loneliness to make him an easy dupe of the Communists; and the Englishman, frightened of the future without Phuong, now knowing the part he played in the American's death, is stirred by his own selfishness and guilt. Mankiewicz has made an unusual and penetrating film. He changed Greene's book and he lessened its bite; but he retained its strong contrasts and its vivid characters; and he also retained the book's moral issues. At the finale, the non-religious, self-centered Englishman wishes that "Someone existed to whom I could say I'm sorry."

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

New Books for Discriminating Readers . . .

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Critics' Choices for Catholic Book Week

ELIZABETH BARTELME

THE RED *Book of the Persecuted Church*. By Albert Galter. Newman. \$5.75. An important and terrifying documentation of the Church in every corner of the Communist-dominated world. The author, after setting forth explanatory material on the methods employed, lets the evidence speak for itself. What emerges from the accumulated facts is grim, irrefutable proof of the sufferings of the Church of Silence under governments ideologically committed to its destruction.

The Case of Cornelia Connelly. By Juliana Wadham. Pantheon. \$3.75. Written with considerable verve, this biography of the beautiful Philadelphian who founded the Holy Child Order tells the extraordinary story of a woman whose life was a veritable storm center. Deprived of her husband and children and publicly persecuted by the former, she suffered calumny without bitterness, guided her nuns with a firm hand and left behind her strong evidence of sanctity. A life at once tragic and triumphant.

American Catholicism. By John Tracy Ellis. University of Chicago Press. \$3. Monsignor Ellis's survey of the place of the Church in American history is both brief and brilliant. From colonial establishment to the present time he has assessed the position, influence, special character and tensions of Catholicism in American life in an illuminating study limited in detail but broad indeed in its general sweep.

Prayer in Practice. By Romano Guardini. Pantheon. \$3.50. A guide to spiritual development which considers the needs of each individual and the pitfalls of which all are victims. Monsignor Guardini has many useful suggestions to make for those who are beginners in the art of prayer as well as for those far advanced in contemplation.

And, because they are both so

uncommonly excellent, two reprints that it is good to have in paperback: Gerald Vann's *The Divine Pity* (Fontana. London. \$.60) and Helen Waddell's translation of *The Desert Fathers* (University of Michigan Press. \$1.25).

JAMES FINN

CLAUDEL. By Wallace Fowlie. Hillary House. \$2. One in the distinguished series, *Studies in Modern European Literature and Thought*, this brief book examines with grace and authority various aspects of one of the most imposing, harsh and impressive figures in modern literature.

On the Philosophy of History. By Jacques Maritain. Scribner's \$3.50. In the relatively discursive style of a disciplined speaker, M. Maritain here brings together in a logical and developed manner the thoughts and observations which previously were only partially formulated or were incidental to larger studies.

The Emergence of Liberal Catholicism in America. By Robert D. Cross. Harvard Press. \$5.50. All who are interested in currents of thought in American history should appreciate this book. But Catholics, of course, should find particularly exciting this study of the sharp conflicts and debates which took place in nineteenth-century Catholicism. Although many of the differences have been resolved, tendencies which took their definition at that time will long continue to have meaning for American Catholics.

The American Parish and the Roman Liturgy. By H. A. Reinhold. Macmillan. \$3.50. Readers of *The Commonweal*, who know Father Reinhold as an outstanding leader in the liturgical movement, will be pleased to have some of his fine essays brought together in a single volume. Modestly subtitled "An Essay in Seven Chapters," this study of worship in America is written with the authority, scholarship and

vigor one has come to expect from Father Reinhold.

GEORGE G. HIGGINS

THE *Life of Hilaire Belloc*. By Robert Speaight. Farrar, Straus. \$6.50. The official biography of a many-sided genius who, in spite of his limitations (which are discussed freely and frankly by Mr. Speaight), was one of the truly great men of our time. Incidentally the best review of this biography—and one of the best appraisals of Belloc I have ever read—was written for *The Commonweal* by Francis McMahon.

Christian Democracy in Western Europe, 1820-1953. By Michael P. Fogarty. Notre Dame Press. \$6.75. To the best of our knowledge, this is the only full-length book in the English language on the history, philosophy, program, and present status of the various Christian (Catholic, Protestant and interdenominational) social action movements, labor unions, and political parties of Western Europe. Indispensable as a reference work. Written in a very lively, non-academic literary style.

Virgil Michel and the Liturgical Movement. By Reverend Paul Marx, O.S.B. Liturgical Press. \$5. As the title indicates, this is really two books for the price of one: (1) The biography of the lamented Virgil Michel of St. John's Abbey in Collegeville, Minnesota and (2) the history of the liturgical movement in the United States, which owes more to Dom Virgil than to any other individual. Be sure to read the footnotes, all of which are extraordinarily interesting and are a credit to the author's complete honesty and objectivity.

Lay People in the Church. By Yves M. J. Congar. O.P. Newman. \$6.75. A series of extraordinarily thought-provoking notes rather than a definitive treatise on the participation of the laity in the mission of the Church, this is the sort of book that

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cannot be absorbed in a single reading. The going is rough in spots, but it is well worth the effort.

Frontiers In American Catholicism. By Walter J. Ong, S.J. Macmillan \$2.50. A collection of more or less homogeneous essays on the application of Christian humanism to the problems of our highly technological age, with special emphasis on the opportunities and challenges that confront American Catholics. Again a series of provocative notes rather than the definitive treatise which Father Ong is eminently well qualified to write and which (I hope) is currently in the works.

Christianity and Economic Problems. By D. L. Munby. St. Martin's Press. \$5. One of the best books I have ever read by a Protestant author on the application of Christian principles to the problems of contemporary economic life. The author, a deeply religious and highly competent economist, admirably succeeds in his attempt to bridge the gap between the thinking of economists and theologians. A Lecturer in Economics at Aberdeen University in Scotland, he deserves to be better known in the United States where he first unveiled the present book as a series of lectures at a Protestant theological seminary.

SISTER MARIS STELLA

IN A Great Tradition. By the Benedictines of Stanbrook. Harper. \$5. What shines from every page of this account of Dame Laurentia McLachlan, Abbess of Stanbrook from 1931 to 1953, is the breadth and freedom of spirit possible within the timeless Benedictine pattern. One begins to understand why the Abbess who could urge her nuns to keep "abreast of the times but never be modern nuns," could also be justly described by G. B. Shaw as "the enclosed nun with the unenclosed mind."

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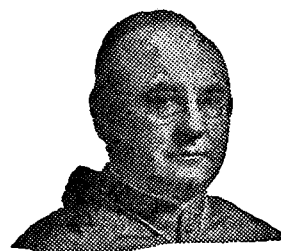
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Sound of a Distant Horn. By Sven Stolpe. Translated by George Lamb. Sheed & Ward. \$3.95. With this novel, Sven Stolpe, Swedish novelist and critic, raises an interesting voice in contemporary Catholic fiction. The story deals with the spiritual peregrinations of a lapsed convert who is dying of cancer. The opening scenes in the bar and at the prizefight create an atmosphere of violence never quite lost throughout the book. The characters have nothing special to recommend them, seeming to exist for what the author says by their means. The Dominican preacher's success produces his failure. The Benedictine mystic's

face excites laughter, but his vision inspires awe. The materialistic doctor's efforts at unbelief do not convince anyone but himself. Through the suffering Edvard, the various threads of the story are drawn together into a pattern from which emerges the terrifying loneliness of the spirit estranged from God. This book is not easy or pleasant reading, but it is a stimulating experience of the soul's perpetual attempt to evade the ultimate.

The Fountain Overflows. By Rebecca West. Viking. \$5. The Aubreys are highly sensitive people whose rapport with the mediocre world is difficult to establish, but through good will and courtesy, the barriers of culture, class, and individual difference disappear. The children, especially Rose, through whose vision we see the story, find this penetration and tolerance difficult, but they begin to learn that real love is humble in dealing with the mysteriously separate other person. They learn also that love does not force its views upon others even

when they are the right ones. All this wisdom, of course, emanates from Clare, the mother. She is the overflowing fountain refreshing everyone she touches. The book, despite some shortcomings, is delightful reading.

The Angels and Their Mission. By Jean Danielou, S.J. Newman. \$2.75. This is a short, scholarly treatise in which Father Danielou considers patristic teaching on the angels—their mission to men, and their role in the sanctification of mankind. Although not a devotional book, the serious reader will find in it a solid basis for devotion. In this age of scientific and sometimes heartless mastery of the created universe, an intelligent awareness of these powerful spirits who are, after all, our loving fellow creatures should help us to the serene faith in God's Providence which we hope to achieve.

The Case of Cornelia Connelly. By Juliana Wadham. Pantheon. \$3.75. Juliana Wadham has written

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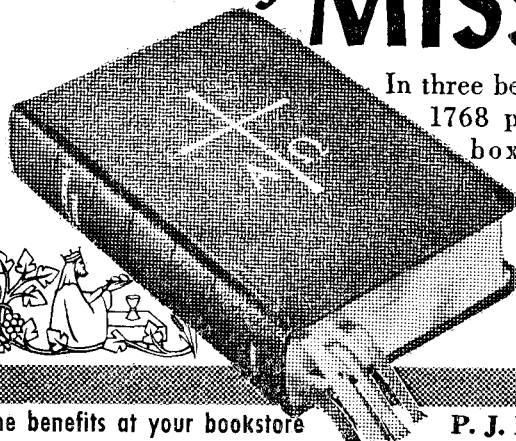
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For reprints the publishers of Penguin Books deserves thanks for J. M. Cohen's translation of the autobiography of Saint Teresa of Avila (*The Life of Saint Teresa*, \$.85) and for Leo Sherley-Price's translation of the medieval English classic of spirituality, Walter Hilton's *The Ladder of Perfection* (\$.85). Add to this Mauriac's *Viper's Tangle* (\$.75) and Evelyn Waugh's *Helena* (\$.65), both in *Image Books*. One wonders if and when the writings of Sigrid Undset will be made available in paperback.

J. N. MOODY

THE Emergence of Liberal Catholicism in America. By Robert D. Cross. Harvard. \$5.50. The author, who is not a Catholic, uses the available printed materials of American Catholic history in the closing decades of the nineteenth century to explain the sharp conflicts in Catholic opinion as the Church grew and prospered. For him, the Liberal Catholics were those who took a hopeful view of the prospects of Catholicism on the American scene, while the Conservatives remained timid and reserved in their approach to American culture. A volume that should help us understand ourselves.

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Thérèse of Lisieux. By H. u. v. Balthasar. Sheed & Ward. \$3.50. Under the surface of this enigmatic saint there is a life that will appeal to the intellectually mature and the spiritually serious. This study is not a debunkery and it faces all the problems raised by this "bourgeois" saint, only to leave one with the sense of profound shame for an earlier rash judgment. But the author is equally stern with the fools who during her lifetime and after tampered with this masterpiece of grace. A searching and careful book, quite serious but with sprouts of humor under the surface growth.

The Pursuit of the Millenium. By Norman Cohn. Essential Books. \$9. This offers a ghastly record of "religious" fanaticism sometimes a hair's breadth from genuine religious enthusiasms. It is packed with factual reporting and has aroused the ire of a reviewer in *Dissent* because it states that true mysticism leads to a purer and more humane personality, while this kind of wild religiously motivated obsession debases. The reviewer pointed to "orthodox" enthusiasm as represented by the Inquisition which is very

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wide of the mark, but the book has a thesis which leads straight from the Millenium to Totalitarianism and anti-Semitism. Historians will have to check the author who has one hundred pages of sources, which may be selective; but it is worth your while, if only you lay it down with the knowledge that Ben Akiba was right and *plus ça change, plus cela reste la même chose*, with differences in detail and size, of course.

Let me end with two gems of theological writing: Louis Bouyer's *Spirit and Forms of Protestantism* (Newman. \$3.75), which no Catholic writer on this subject can ignore with impunity and which blazes a pathway to irenic theology; and its slim and engaging companion, Father Yves Congar's *Christ, Our Lady and the Church* (Newman. \$2.75).

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The Emergence of Liberal Catholicism in America. By Robert D. Cross. Harvard Press. \$5.50. Not a Catholic, Professor Cross writes with intelligence and understanding of the conflict between the forces urging separation and those urging accommodation as the best counsel for the Church in nineteenth-century America. Highly relevant for a more complete understanding of our contemporary American Catholic situations.

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On the Philosophy of History. By Jacques Maritain. Scribner's. \$3.50. Admittedly fragmentary and incomplete, but filled with rich observations and what can only be called Christian wisdom. Together with Christopher Dawson's *The Dynamics of World History* this is almost necessary reading for the Christian pilgrim in the "age of anxiety."

LEO R. WARD

THE Emergence of Liberal Catholicism in America. By Robert D. Cross. Harvard. \$5.50. It is fortunate that some one attempts, on a high level, too, to put together the matters treated in this book. The work is based on records, especially the printed statements of actors in the drama, though without close study of the actors themselves. One might complain only that the author does not nail down well enough the idea "liberal" as applied to religion and as distinguished from its political uses and that he tries to do too much in one volume.

The Great Crisis in American Catholic History, 1895-1900. By Thomas T. McAvoy. Regnery. \$6.00. This work covers much the same subject, even much the same problem as the former, but is far more compact and proceeds with much more attention to detail and precision and above all to the men engaged in the problem studied. The study by Dr. Cross is valuable, but this more careful study is invaluable to anyone wanting to understand American religious life.

Virgil Michel and the Liturgical Movement. By Paul Marx. Liturgical Press. \$5. This historical study of a big man and a big event in twentieth-century American Catholic life is another indispensable work for people who want to know what is going on among Catholics

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De Valera and the March of a Nation. By Mary C. Bromage. Noontday. \$4.95. This is a fine book written with devotion to the man and also to the facts in the case. The author does not let her feelings for the subject, which we judge to be considerable, get in the way of seeing the whole spread of events and the tangle of problems within which, of course, De Valera's life has been lived. The best "life" so far of this distinguished man.

Reflections on America. By Jacques Maritain. Scribner's. \$3.50. Even a minor work by a major author is an event. Jacques Maritain sees us fairly clearly, and with his accustomed deep charity speaks of every good and every promising thing in our national life, and notably of how he sees the main positive points of his famous work on "integral humanism" as having "an affinity with the American climate by anticipation." Not that he thinks his ideal "solutions" proposed in that work are about to be realized here, but he does think America less far off from them than any other nation.

CRITICS

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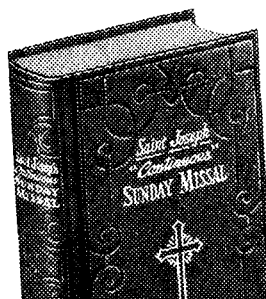
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